

Liechtenstein

The Tiny Alpine State & Its Placid Folk

By Edward Wright

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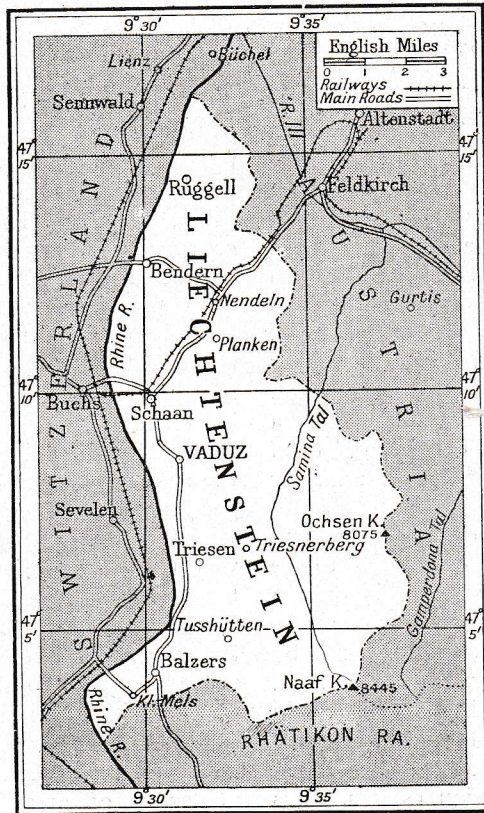
THE sovereign principality of Liechtenstein is a romantic curiosity in the history and geography of Europe. The area of this independent State is estimated at sixty-five square miles, and it extends in twelve miles of mountain pasture and castled cliff along the upper Rhine, between the old crown land of Austria and Switzerland. Its folk, numbering about 11,000, are also an historic curiosity. They now speak German, but a hundred years ago they used a rustic Latin, and were the northernmost remnant of the Roman garrison of the traffic line between Italy and Lake Constance.

The principality is a fragment of the Holy Roman Empire that Charlemagne founded and Napoleon dissolved, and as such dates its sovereignty from 1806. Liechtenstein is only its modern and additional name. It is properly "the Sweet Valley"—"Vallis Dulcis," softened into the extant name of the village capital and manor of Vaduz.

The Liechtenstein family of famous poets and fighting-men

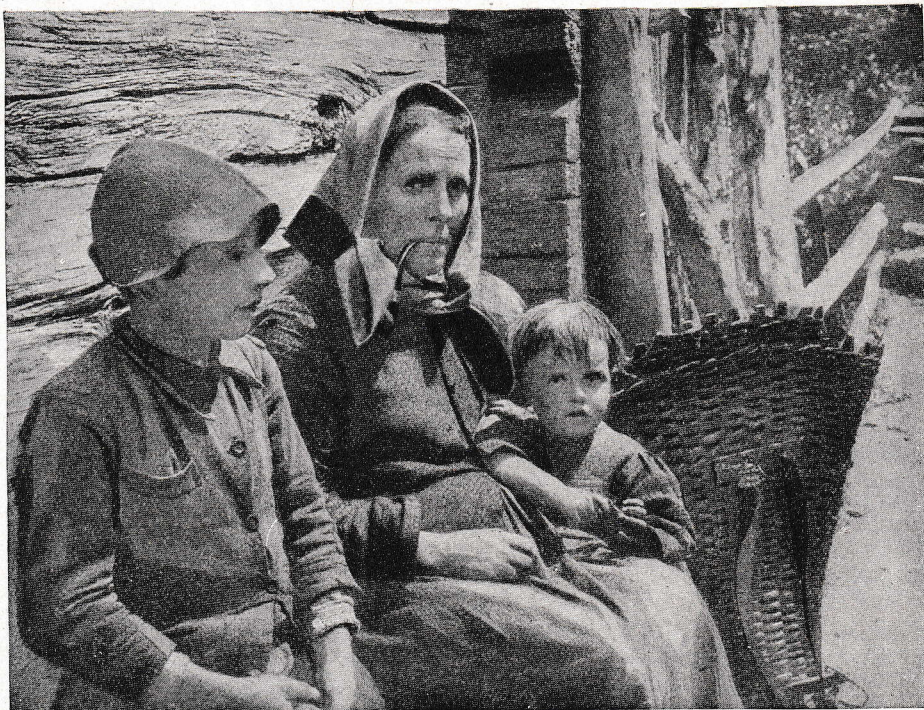
bought the manor of Schellenberg in 1699, added the neighbouring domain of Vaduz to it by purchase in 1713, and as a reward for military services to Austria the new Liechtenstein was elected into a principality of the Holy Roman Empire in 1719. The new prince was a man of enormous wealth, with an annual revenue of £200,000, and although Prince John II., who succeeded in 1858, has had to live in reduced circumstances on a rental of only £100,000 a year, he has made his little kingdom a quiet paradise for his people. Technically,

the Liechtensteiners have lived for half a century in a state of war under a benevolent despotism. Their army of eighty men, one bugler, and a captain, marched in 1866 through Austria against Prussia, and, failing to arrive in time to be defeated at Sadowa, were overlooked in the treaty of peace. Their eighty helmets of leather and brass, their eighty muskets, the bugler's horn, the captain's sword, and the glorious red and blue banner of Liechtenstein, still hang in Vaduz Castle. They



THE STATE OF LIECHTENSTEIN

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VINE-DRESSER AT EASE WITH HER SMALL SON AND LARGE PIPE

During the midday interval from work among the vines, this matron of Liechtenstein and her elder son, their meal over, take a well-earned rest against the wooden walls of this rough shanty. The mother, whose sturdy back must presently bear the great basket beside her, has the double consolation of tobacco and the prattle of her babe, as they all enjoy the languor of the soft sunlight

were not used in the Great War, as the people refused to bear the expense of a standing army after being left out of the earlier treaty of peace, and accepted instead a free constitution from their Prince. By a constitution adopted in October, 1921, Liechtenstein has a parliament of fifteen members, twelve of them elected by the democracy and three appointed by the potentate. There is a secretary of state, a chancellor of the exchequer, chief justice, state engineer, and manager of forests.

Parliament meets once a year, and now and then sends a deputation to the Prince. All this, however, is only a charming little comic-opera affair, maintained at considerable expense by the Prince. When he was a young man, and one of the most brilliant figures in the Court of Vienna, he began building a great palace in that city, near which were his main Moravian estates. His faithful people on the Rhine were

alarmed, and begged him to cease palace-building in Vienna, and come and live with them.

He, however, had little taste for country life, and as a generous compromise he surrendered his small revenue from the principality, and also submitted to taxation by the free government that he established. But this was not the end of his liabilities. In practice he remained, until the revolution of 1918 really reduced his immense fortune, the most benevolent of fatherly despots, good-naturedly spending money on all works of improvement that his State was unable to afford. To save his parliament the expense of journeying to Vienna, he connected his palace with his capital by a telephone line, which made it quicker to obtain cheques from him. In effect Liechtenstein is merely a poor, unfertile, Alpine estate, upon which an amused and generous nobleman of great wealth has spent a remarkable amount of money.

LIECHTENSTEIN & ITS PEOPLE

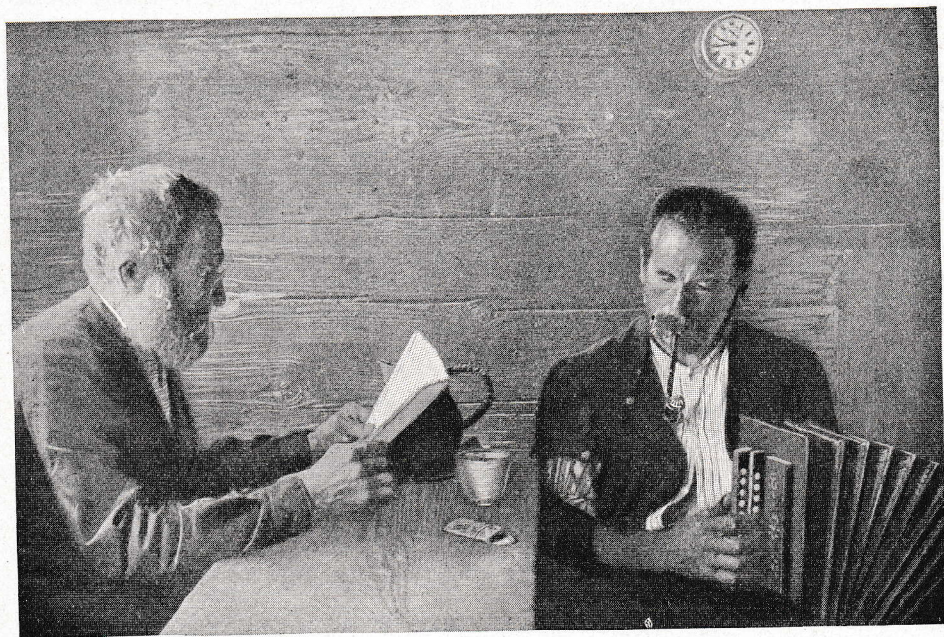
The chief expense to which the thousand or so free citizens of voting age are put is the maintenance of the valley dyke. The Upper Rhine between Lake Constance and the Grisons is a stream of peculiar habit. It has formed a vast level floor of sand and gravel, through which it trickles until the sun melts the snow and ice of the Alps. Then, in an enormous and dangerous torrent, it pours the mountain debris in its shallow bed below the white castled cliff of Vaduz, and tries to sweep away the growing crops and drown the farming folk. So every year the dyke that defends the orchards and fields of flax and maize along the narrow ribbon of the fertile ground in Liechtenstein has to be overhauled and repaired and made proof against disaster.

In ancient times little or no trouble was taken in the matter of farming in the valley. What was farmed was the large summer traffic between Lombardy, Switzerland, and Southern Germany that passed beneath the old Roman

town of Vaduz. All carriers of merchandise had to pay toll or submit to robbery and ill-treatment. The lordship of Vaduz was then worth purchasing or conquering, and when the Swiss broke loose from Austria, life for generations was little more than a succession of plundering raids on either side of the Upper Rhine.

Another movement of invasion against Liechtenstein was only defeated some years ago. It began when the great domestic problem of festival illuminations was definitely solved. The loyal people complained to their Prince of the cost to which they were put in illuminating Vaduz and the hamlets when celebrating his birthday and the day of his accession. With good-humoured munificence he asked them what the festal illuminations cost, and fixed a sum that he agreed to pay every year.

Afterwards a new engineer-minister induced John II. to provide capital for illuminating water-power from the innumerable mountain torrents, and in



NEARING BED-TIME IN A RUSTIC SHACK OF LIECHTENSTEIN

Life moves at an equable pace in the principality, a peaceful oasis among lands so often deserted by tranquillity. Here it seems to matter little what troubles this Power, or what threatens that; among their drowsy pastures and quiet mountains the Liechtensteiners can be indifferent to the turmoil of nations. And, when day dies, a little reading and music prelude easy slumber



"OH! HAPPINESS OF SWEET RETIRED CONTENT!"

Wealth and want are equal strangers to the simple folk of Liechtenstein. Thrift is natural to them, and by the time old age overtakes them, most of them own an unpretentious home where Darby can smoke his large, drooping pipe at his ease, while Joan sits beside him, Bible and rosary in her faithful hands, and both enjoy the evening peace in which their long day is ending

addition to lighting up the country generally at a cost of less than five shillings a year for each electric lamp, cotton and flax weaving industries, saw mills, and other electrically powered works were founded. Liechtenstein was very happy. She had no unemployed or poverty-stricken folk. Her population, however, increased at a surprising rate.

Young men in neighbouring lands, wishing to avoid military service, no longer fled to America. A special measure was needed to stop their invasion of the tiny mountain State.

Few of the people are well off. On the other hand, only those prevented from working by sickness or age are in danger of poverty, and they are helped.

LIECHTENSTEIN & ITS PEOPLE

Most of the peasant members of parliament work for their living, and households that can afford to keep a single maid-servant are rare. Rather than waste money on a servant, a prospering farmer, with a sunny slope for orchard and vineyard, beneath a ridge that screens off cold winds, will put his savings by for a new house.

He feels that the labour and thrift of a lifetime are crowned when he possesses a whitewashed house of modern design, with a heating system of hot-water pipes, instead of the old-fashioned, big, tiled stove. So there are no picturesque old dwellings in the little whitewashed village of Vaduz, that houses some twelve hundred souls.



MOUNTAIN GIRLHOOD

Untainted blood, simple habits, and exhilarating air make this girl of the Liechtenstein highlands a most pleasing embodiment of fearless womanhood



HAND-CARVED CHAIR IN THE MAKING

Wrinkled brows and tangled beard, and the skill whose results may be seen taking shape, mark the years of his experience as the old wood-carver looks up a moment from his task

But the minute capital is a pleasant scene at evening, when the black and dun cattle straggle down the white street, and push the merry children aside for a last, slow drink at the fountains as the Angelus sounds and the devout folk stand bowed in prayer.

They are very good Catholics in the principality, owing perhaps to the fact that the ancient foe, just across the Rhine, is a Protestant, who once

LIECHTENSTEIN & ITS PEOPLE

ruined their castle, destroyed their farms, and carried their former lord a prisoner over the river.

Without its costly improvements, carried out in the course of two centuries, it is doubtful if Liechtenstein would bring in £1,000 a year as summer pasturage. The land is a rough offshoot of the Rhätikon Alps, and consists of two mountain stretches, rising above 6,000 feet, with a torrent vale between

them, and the Rhine as western boundary. The modern custom of summer holiday-making has been a source of prosperity to the mountaineers, who are virtually self-supporting in the matter of food, and export into the colder Tirol out of their superabundance. In the terrible famine days that followed the Great War, the tiny neutral State on the eastern edge of Switzerland was a tempting refuge.



PRETTY PEASANT GIRLS WHO WALK IN RICH ATTIRE

Peasant costume in Liechtenstein is very charming, and on gala days is still worn in its pristine glory, unchanged by modern fashion. The comely woman of Schaan, shown on the left, is justifiably proud of her filmy haloed headdress, embroidered gown, and frilly bodice exposing pretty arms, while her countrywoman on the right, who hails from Triesen, challenges an equal meed of admiration



LIECHTENSTEIN: PEASANT MAID OF VADUZ

In the capital of Liechtenstein, the little principality lying between Austrian and Swiss territory, peasant women may be seen whose comely features are stamped with the warm beauty of the South



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